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EXCISE

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6600
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 4201
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AMCONSUL DANANG 937
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2493.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5646

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SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: CONVERSATIONS WITH DEPUTIES

1. IN CONVERSATION MORNING SEPTEMBER 11, [redacted] OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE PRO-GOVERNMENT AND MORE SPECIFICALLY PRO-KY, EXPRESSED VIEW THAT BOTH UPPER HOUSE AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS WERE RIGGED.

2. [redacted] GAVE EMBOFF COPY OF VOTE TALLY FROM A KIEN PHONG

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POLLING STATION AND SEPARATE TALLY COMPLIED AT DISTICT HEADQUARTERS. FIGURES FOR SEVERAL SLATES, INCLUDING NUMBER 42 OF WHICH [redacted] WAS MEMBER, WERE SHOWN TO HAVE DECLINED CONSIDERABLY BETWEEN POLLING PLACE AND DISTRICT HEADQUGTERS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Izenberg DATE 12/29/98
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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ELECTION. [ ] ADDED THAT HE HAD HEARD REPORTS OF MEETING BETWEEN KY AND DEMOCRATIC-ALLIANCE DEPUTIES EVENING OF

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SEPTEMBER 8 OR 9 AT WHICH POSTURE TOWARDS ELECTIONS MAY HAVE BEEN DECIDED. [ ] HOWEVER, HAD NOT YET HEARD WHAT OUTCOME, IF ANY, OF MEETING HAD BEEN. HE NONETHELESS EXPRESSED CONCERN AT WHAT PRO-KY DEPUTIES MIGHT BE UP TO.

6. COMMENTING ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE NEW UPPER HOUSE, [ ] PREDICTED THAT CATHOLICS WOULD BY NO MEANS ACT AS COHESIVE BLOC. LIST OF GENERAL CAO IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THOSE OF NGUYEN GIA HIENAND NGUYEN VAN HUYEN AND BLOCS WOULD SHAKE DOWN SOMEWHAT ALONG SAME LINES AS THEY HAD IN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. [ ] PREDICTED WITH OBVIOUS RELISH THAT THERE WOULD BE SOME "BITTER STRUGGLES" IN NEW UPPER HOUSE AND HE HAS ALREADY BEGUN LOBBYING INFORMALLY FOR SUPPORT OF HIS OWN DRAFT POLITICAL PARTY LAW, TO WHICH AS PARTY MEMBER, HE OF COURSE ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE./

7. SEVERAL TIMES DURING CONVERSATION [ ] COMPLAINED OF HA THUC KY'S "LACK OF OBJECTIVITY" DURING PRESIDENTIAL CMPAIGN. KY HAD GROSSLY OVERRATED HIS APPEAL TO VOTERS, [ ] MAINTAINED, AND WOULD PROBABLY HAVE BEEN BETTER OFF RUNNING FOR UPPER HOUSE. [ ] DID, HOWEVER, ADD THAT HA THUC KY IS ON GOOD TERMS WITH THIEU'S ENTOURAGE, HINTING

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THAT KY MAY BE IN LINE FOR CABINET POSITION.

8. COMMENT: A) [ ] IS UNDOUBTEDLY PIQUED BY THE POOR SHOWING OF HIS UPPER HOUSE SLATEIN WHICH, ACCORDING TO UNOFFICIAL RESULTS, FINISHED, NOT SURPRISINGLY, IN 21ST POSITION.HOWEVER, IS IS RESPONSIVE TO KY, AND HIS ATTITUDE MAY REFLECT CERTAIN FEELINGS WITHIN KY CAMP. COMPLICATING FACTOR IS THAT VIRTUALLY ALL DEMOCRATIC-ALLIANCE DEPUTIES WHO RAN FOR THE UPPER HOUSE WERE DEFEATED, INCLUDING BLOC LEADER LE

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PHUOC SANG, THUS LESSENING THEIR STAKE IN CURRENT CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS. CONVERSELY, SUCCESSFUL UPPER HOUSE CANDIDATES LIKE [redacted] APPEAR TO NEED LITTLE CONVINCING THAT THEIR BEST INTEREST LIE IN ORDERLY TRANSITION TO GOVERNMENT UDER NEWLY-ELECTED PRESIDENT.

B) WE AGREE WITH [redacted] THAT THIEU-KY RELATIONS ARE IMPORTANT FACTOR IN VALIDATION PROCESS ALTHOUGH DEGREE OF PERSONAL LOYALTY OF DEMORATIC-ALLIANCE DEPUTIES TO KY DIFFICULT TO GAUGE NOW THAT KY IS DESTINED FOR ROLE SECONDARY TO THIEU. IN FACT, THIEU WOULD PROBABLY BE WELL ADVISED TO TAKE INITIATIVES OF HIS OWN WITH DEPUTIES AND AT THIS STAGE HE MIGHT FIND THEM MORE DIRECTLY

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RESPONSIVE TO HIM THAN AT ANY TIME IN THE PAST.

C) WE WILL KEEP IN TOUCH WITH DEPUTIES AND REPORT FULLY ON THEIR VIEWS AS THE BECOME KNOWN TO US.

GP-3. BUNKER

HNOTE: AS RECEIVED.

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[ ]SLATE WAS GIVEN 164 VOTES AT POLLING PLACE, 33 AT DISTRICT). [ ] IS CONVINCED THAT TALL ES ARE AUTHENTIC AND THAT SIMILAR MANIPULATION TOOK PLACE COUNTRYWIDE. HE CLAIMED TO BE EQUALLY CERTAIN THAT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIO WAS ALSO REGGIED, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT HAVE SUPPORTING EVIDENCE. [ ] SAID THAT BOTH ELECTIONS SHUOLD BE THROWN OUT, AND CLAIMED THAT MAJORITY OF ASSEMBLY SHARED HIS VIEW.

3. EMBOFF TOLD[ ] THAT WE HAVE LITTLE REAL EVIDENCE OF CHEATING IN EIGHTER#ELECTION. WHILE THEREMAY HAVE BEEN ISOLATED IRREGULARITIES, IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT THERE WAS WIDESPREAD MANIPULATION OF RETURNS; AND THIEU-KY VICTORY WAS NOT DUE TO CHEATING. EMBOFF CAUTIONED[ ] THAT HE SHOULDSEEK MORE EVIDENCE BEFORE MAKING SUCH SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS. TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD BE EXTREMELY DANGEROUS FOR VIET-CFM. [ ] WAS DISAPPOINTED AT UNSYMPATHETIC

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HEARING, NOTING THAT "OF COURSE AMERICANS WOULD HAVE TO SAY THAT". HE ASKED THAT HIS EVIDENCE BE SHOWN TO POLITICAL COUNSELOR.

4. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF SEPTEMBER 10, REVOLUTIONARY DAI VIET DEPUTY[ ]
BLOC IN ASSEMBLY WOULD PUSH FOR VALIDATION OF THIEU'S ELECTION. HE ASSERTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN CASES OF FRAUD IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION BUT MAINTAINED THAT IT IS "DUTY" OF DEPUTIES TO ACCEPT RESULTS. [ ] WAS OBVIOUSLY PLEASED WITH UPPER HOUSE VICTORY OF RDVT SLATE (21) OF WHICH HE IS A MEMBER AND HIS VICTORY IS NO DOUBT FACTOR IN ATTITUDE TOWARDS VALIDATION OF ELECTION.

5. ASKED IF HE THOUGHTNATIONAL ASSEMBLY WOULD VALIDATE THIEU'S ELECTION, [ ] SAID IT ALL DEPENDED ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THIEU AND KY. IF THE TWO REACH SATISFACTORY WORKING ARRANGEMENT, THEN VALIDATION IS NO PROBLEM. IF THEY DON'T, KY PROBABLY CAN MARSHAL SUFFICIENT SUPPORT IN ASSEMBLY TO AT LEAST SERIOUSLY DISCREDIT, IF NOT ANNUL

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